



SERMISTĀ

A DRĀMA IN FIVE ACTS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE BENGALI

BY

[THE AUTHOR]

MICHAEL M. S. DUTT.

Cin. I'm Cinna—the Poet.

Cit. Tear him for his bad verses.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

CALCUTTA:

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TO THE RAJAS

PERTAUB CHUNDER SING

AND

ISSUR CHUNDER SING,

BAHADURS,

This Translation

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THEIR OBEDIENT AND HUMBLE SERVANT

MICHAEL MADHUS[^]UDANA DUTT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE work —of which the following pages contain a translation—is the first attempt in the Bengali language to produce a classical and regular Drama. The story of Sermistá will be found in the First Book of the Mahábhárata—almost immediately after that of Sakuntalá—rendered so famous by the splendid genius of Kálidása.

Sermistá is to be acted at the elegant private Theatre attached to the Belgatchia Villa of the Rajas of Paikpara. Should the Drama ever again flourish in India, posterity will not forget these noble gentlemen—the earliest friends of our rising national Theatre.

In preparing this translation of my own Play, I hope I have not failed to interpret my own thoughts with sufficient exactitude to give European readers a clear idea of the original. The rose—in the pretty Persian Fable—scented the piece of clay that had associated with it: if the mighty spirits of the West and the East, to whom the author of Sermistá has dedicated the best years of his youth, have not done anything for him, he is a most unfortunate man, and deserves the reader's pity!

M. M. S. D.

Calcutta, 1859.

SERMISTÁ.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

YAYATI *King of India.*

MADHAVYA *Vidūshaka or Companion of the King.*

MINISTER

SUCRACHARYA *The Arch-Priest of the Asuras or Titans.*

KAPILA *His Disciple.*

VAKASURA *An Asura or Titan Chief.*

ANOTHER ASURA.

A BRAMIN.

WARDER OF THE PALACE.

WOMEN.

DEVAYANI *Daughter to Sucrachārya—afterwards
Queen to Yayāti.*

PURNIKA... *Her Companion.*

SERMISTA..... *Daughter to King of the Asuras.*

DEVIKA *Her Companion.*

NATI *A Female Musician.*

A MAID SERVANT.

COURTIERS—CITIZENS—DANCING-WOMEN—MUSICIANS, &c.,

SCENE in the First ACT, the Valley of the Himālaya and the Retreat
or Monastery of the Sage Sucrachārya; in the Second and the succeeding
ACTS, Pratisthāna—the chief City of the Kings of the Lunar Dynasty.

SERMISTĀ.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The valley of the Himālaya—the city of the gods
at a distance.*

AN ASURA DISCOVERED IN FULL ARMOUR.^(a)

Asur. Here, in this wild mountain solitude, do I wander night and day. Whene'er I see yond' dim and distant city pouring forth its armed legions, away I fly on the wings of the wind and bear the tidings to my gracious sovereign—for such is his mighty will. (*Paces up and down.*) In this lone and vast valley, a thousand birds people the air with the softest melody and myriads of sweet flowers bloom and smile around me. Anon, the perfume of the unfading párijāta^(b) from those celestial groves, steals o'er my senses and the dying echoes of the glorious songs of the Apsaras^(c) fall on my ravished ears! I hear the deafening roar of the lion; the thunder growl of the tiger; and the hoarse and angry voice of the mountain-torrent ceaselessly struggling to leap down its cloud-cradle. How beautiful! There are sights and sounds here that woo my soul to forget the sorrows of absence from home and friends and they do not woo in vain. (*Paces up and down.*) Ha? Do I hear the sounds of coming feet? 'Tis hard to say whether 'tis a friend or foeman that approaches me:

• • •

howbeit, 'tis thus I prepare me to welcome him. (*Draws his sword.*) Methinks the firm-seated earth trembles at the tread of this stalwart and crested warrior !

Enter VAKASURA.

Who goes there ?

Vak. May victory ever sit on the banner of the lord of the Asuras ! I am one of his Majesty's liege-men.

Asur. Ah ! my lord Vakásurá ? Good time of day unto your Excellency !

Vak. Good morrow ! How fares it with thee, honest soldier ?

Asur. Excellent well, an't please your Valour. Your Excellency is welcome to this wilderness ! I pray you, what news, my lord ?

Vak. Ah ! my brave comrade, we've just escaped absolute destruction !

Asur. How, my lord ?

Vak. The sage Sucra^(d) was about to abandon us and ours for ever !

Asur. May the God we worship, forbid so dire a calamity ! But I pray you, wherefore, my lord ?

Vak. Our sweet Princess Sermistá in some girlish quarrel, threw Devayáni, the sage's daughter, into a pit. When this reached the ears of the Priest, he grew fiery hot with rage ! I tell thee, brave Asura, 'twas a miracle the flame, thus kindled, did not consume us and ours to ashes !

Asur. True, my lord. But this is strange ! 'Tis reported abroad that the sage's fair daughter is as dear to our sweet Princess as her own life !

Vak. Ah, well. But they're both young and both beautiful, and youth and beauty make women heedless !

Asur. I pray you, proceed, my lord !

Vak. The indignant sage rushed into the audience-chamber unushered and exclaimed in a voice of thunder: From this day forth let destruction mark thee for her own. I abandon thee and thine, thou hapless king! The gloomy frown and the ominous words of the sage paled the boldest brows and deep and sudden silence came into that royal hall!

Asur. And then, my lord?

Vak. Our gracious sovereign spoke with humble and troubled accents and said: How have I sinned before thee, father, that thou shouldst so cruelly destroy me and mine—thou, that art our sole refuge, our only preserver?

Asur. What said the sage to this, my lord?

Vak. He said—Thou, king, art the mighty lord of myriads of warlike Asuras, the dreaded foes even of the immortal gods themselves: and I—I'm but a poor Bramin! How can I be thy refuge, thy preserver?

Asur. Anger, I see, had made his reverence both bitter as well as satirical! Proceed, I pray you, my lord!

Vak. Our royal lord threw himself at the feet of the Priest and piteously besought him to explain the cause of his displeasure. The sage raised the king from the ground, and when he had ended the tale of the wrong done to his daughter, sternly demanded that our sweet Sermistá should serve Devayáni as her—slave!

Asur. Ha? and then, my lord?

Vak. The illustrious lord of the Asuras looked at the sage like a man who had heard the awful voice of doom! O, what unuttered agony writhed his royal brow! But this seemed to re-kindle the fiercest flames of anger in the sage's heart and he exclaimed: Let me begone, and perish thou with thy wicked and arrogant daughter!

Asur. Merciful God!—And then, my lord?

Vak. The Minister rose and said to his Majesty: When a merchant, noble Sovereign, sails on the pathless Deep with

his argosie laden with priceless gems and gold and silver, if the skies grow black with clouds and the wild tempest spirit comes rushing on, lashing the waters to fury, does he not, that merchant, cast to the roaring waves his priceless gems, his gold, his silver, to escape with life?

Asur. What said his Majesty, my lord?

Vak. Our noble lord commanded the sweet Princess to be brought to him and having acquainted her with the stern and cruel wish of the sage, said to her—My child, save the proud race of the Asuras from destruction!

Asur. Alas! what said the sweet lady to this, my lord?

Vak. (*Sighing.*) Ah, my brave comrade, when the royal maiden came to the audience-chamber, her countenance beamed like the autumnal Moon; but when she heard the cruel words of the sage, she grew pale as does that autumnal Moon when dark-browed clouds come rushing on to veil its splendor! O great God! What strange destiny is hers! When the Princess withdrew from the royal Presence with the sage, our noble monarch wept aloud! I tell thee, fellow soldier, it breaks my heart when I recall to mind the words of hopeless sorrow that fell from his Majesty's lips!

Asur. Alas! alas! But who can resist Destiny? I pray you, my lord, has the sage then forgotten his anger?

Vak. Why should he not?

Asur. We have indeed escaped absolute perdition. If the deadly foes of our race that dwell in yond' city, had heard of this, how would they have rejoiced!

Vak. True, but think you, brave Asura, the gods know nought of this?

Asur. 'Tis hard to say, my lord. Their messengers are swifter than swift-winged thought, than swift-footed lightning; and nothing can escape them, or in heaven, or in earth, or in the realms below.

Vak. See, profound repose seems to brood o'er yond' city.

Asur. Know you not, noble warrior, that all nature is lulled into silence before the storm bursts forth in its tameless fury? But let that pass. Pray you, my lord, where dwells the Princess now?

Vak. (*Sighing.*) In the solemn retreat of the sage with his daughter. Alas! her absence makes the city of the Asuras a dark, a waste howling wilderness! I tell thee, brave friend, when I recall to mind the grief of the Queen, the despair of the king, my heart aches, and my feet refuse to retrace my steps homeward! (*Behind the stage, trumpets, shouts, and the clash of arms.*)

Asur. There, my lord, I pray you, hark! How fearful!

Vak. How now? Think you the wicked host rise to invade the land of the Asuras?

Behind. Arm, arm, ye sons of Immortality and slay the accursed race of the Asuras. O slay them!

Asur. Ha! Is the end of all things come that the fountains of the mighty Deep are being burst open? How fearful!

Vak. Come, my brave comrade, let us back to our friends. O, it warms my heart to hear that twang of a hostile bow! By my faith, there is glorious music in't!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Retreat of the sage Sucrachárya.*

Enter DEVIKA.

Devi. The Lord of day is sinking behind the western mountains. See, the feather'd tenants of this calm Retreat

are winging back their way to their pendent homes, and filling the air with joyous melody: the queenly lotus, now that her bright-eyed lover^(e) has pressed on her soft brow his golden kiss of farewell, is veiling her beauty in sadness: the chakravāka^(f) and its bride sit in silent sorrow on yond leafy branch with their eyes fixed on each other, for the dark hour of separation is nigh at hand: the holy sages are busy, each in his cell, preparing for the solemn evening sacrifice: the full-uddered kine are seeking their young ones with tender impatience. The shades of evening are fast closing around, and yet—where is the Princess? (*sighs.*) Is not all this a dream—a hideous dream? O, can it be that the fairest of royal maidens should wear the vile chains of slavery? Where, alas! is the soft bloom of beauty that erst sat on her gentle brow? Where the beams of gladness that shone in those eyes once brighter than the gazelle's? Alas!—all faded and gone! And why should it not be so? (*sighs and looks around.*) Ah! there I see my poor friend. With what weary steps does she walk!

Enter SERMISTA.

My Princess! Why so late this eve?

Serm. My sweet maiden! know'st thou not that I am now a slave and have no will of my own?

Devi. My Princess! your sad words break my heart! Alas! thou flower of beauty, thou gentlest of Earth's daughters! how cruel is thy destiny! (*weeps.*)

Serm. Prithee, why dost thou weep?

Devi. My Princess! even the cold heart of a stone would melt at the tale of your sufferings!

Serm. What sufferings, thou silly maiden?

Devi. The Moon, in the fulness of her splendour, has been hurl'd headlong from her starry throne to the vile earth: the

daughter of a mighty king is doom'd to toil as a slave !
O great God ! What strange sport is this ! (*weeps.*)

Serm. Nay, my gentle one, tho' I am a slave, yet who can rob me of my precious royalty ? Prithee, look at me now. This grassy bank is my emerald throne ! (*sits down on a bank.*) This stately tree with its hundred leafy arms, spreads over me the canopy of state. Behold the fair kumudini^(s) blooming in yond' crystal pool—she is my hand-maiden ! Hark to the soft music of the bee as he gathers honey from the golden cup of each night-blossom—he is my musician ! See, the sweet South is fanning my royal brow and soothing my senses with perfumes stolen from a hundred blushing flow'rs ; and lo ! the glorious Moon herself and her attendant stars are shining above me like golden cressets ! And gay Fancy is the Mistress of Revels to my sublime Majesty ! My good maiden, dost thou call me unhappy—me, who possess such vast, such varied sources of enjoyment !

Devi. (*Smiling.*) My sweet Princess ! Is this a time to jest ?

Serm. Call'st thou this jesting, maiden ? Know'st thou not, that true happiness has its birth in the depths of the heart ? Why should I seek it from things external ? If thou woo'st the lute wherein the sweet spirit of Melody dwells enshrined, 'twill soothe thy ears with its soft, sad voice, in the palace-chamber as in the peasants' lowly cot—it can know no change !

Devi. O, how cruel art thou, thou cursed Destiny !

Serm. O fie ! Why dost thou blame Destiny ? If I were to place before a man the sweetest food—food worthy of the gods themselves and if that man were to mix it with poison and eat it and then sicken and die, would'st thou call me the author of that man's woes ?

Devi. My Princess, how could I ?

Serm. Then, why call'st thou Destiny cruel ? Who

tempted me to quarrel with Devayáni? Mine own unruly passions! See, my father is the lord of the vast race of Asuras, the splendor of his royalty is like that of the meridian sun; even the immortal gods tremble at the might of his arm! I am his only child and yet I am a—slave! Have I not myself wantonly woo'd calamity to my path? Have I not like a bedlamite mixed worm-wood and gall with the honied draught Destiny gave me to drink? How can'st thou curse Destiny? How can'st thou call her cruel?

Devi. My Princess! Your words fall on my ears as if they came from the divine lips of the goddess of Eloquence herself, and they soothe my fevered heart like balm! O great God! how can'st thou suffer so sweet a lady to be so cruelly entreated! *(weeps.)*

Serm. My gentle friend! Thou weep'st in vain.

Devi. My sweet Princess! Must you then live and die a slave?

Serm. Can a captive break open the thick-ribbed portals of his dungeon at his own will? Of what profit is it then to him to let impatience gnaw and eat into his heart? *(solemnly.)* O, who can burst asunder the strong-corded net which Misfortune has woven round me but the gracious Father of us all!

Devi. *(With astonishment.)* My Princess! Has the calm Spirit of Resignation tempted herself on your lotus-heart that the turbulent waves of passion have sunk to peaceful rest? How strange! You speak like an aged recluse, who has well-nigh sigh'd away existence in penance and prayer in some solitude, with pensive contemplation for her companion! O great God! Dost thou fling the precious pári-játa to the lonely desert untrod by mortal feet? Alas! dost thou create the brightest of gems to bury them beneath the unfathom'd waters of the vasty Deep? *(weeps.)*

Serm. Come, sweet Play-fellow, let us now seek our

cells ; for see, like the kumudini, which is the lover of the Moon, Devayáni is coming hitherward with her friend Púrniká. Thou, sweet, ever call'st me thy Lotus. Now, if I be thy Lotus, ought I to bloom here at this dark hour ? Has not my radiant love sunk behind the western hills ?^(b) 'Tis meet that I should mourn his absence in silent sorrow. Prithee, let us to our cells.

Devi. My Princess ! How can you call that haughty Bramin's daughter—Kumudini ? In my poor opinion, you are the full Moon and she—wicked Ráhu ! O, that I had the Discus of Vishnu—I would slay her on the spot !^(c)

Serm. (*Smiling.*) O, fie ! Art thou mad ? It is her father's might that shields our fathers from that terrible Discus ! Come, let us seek our cells.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter DEVAYANI and PURNIKA.

Deva. (*Looking up.*) O, how beautiful ! Prithee, look at the radiant assembly above ! Methinks, 'tis the bridal of the Earth, and the glorious host of stars and the bright Moon have met together—each eager to woo and win her ! And look around thee, sweet ! See, what dewy flowers are blooming to-night as if to garland the blushing bride ! (*sighs.*)

Púr. Does this glorious sight teach thee to sigh ? Does the splendor of the Lord of Rôhini^(d) sadden thy heart ? O, fie ! I know not how it is, but since the day of thy quarrel with the Princess Sermistá, a strange change has come over thee. Thou hast grown silent and sad like one who dares not trust her tongue with the thoughts that lie deep in her heart ! I pray thee, sweet friend, unbosom thyself to me ! 'Twere unkind of thee to conceal thy thoughts from me !

Deva. Nay, chide me not, my gentle Púrniká ! I have oft-times longed to unlock my heart to thee, but——(*hesitates.*)

Púr. Prithee, tell me thy tale, for I do long to hear it, dear !

Deva. Hear it then—When I was flung into that dark and dismal pit, my heart misgave me and I fainted through fear. When my senses returned, the same profound darkness still clung round me and I wept aloud, and there was no one save Echo to hear my cries and she heard them only to mock ! I know not how long I wept. A sweet voice fell on mine ears and it said, Who art thou that weep'st in this lonesome and gloomy pit ? I replied, I know not who thou art, but save me or I perish. On this, some one descended to the bottom of the pit and lifted me up as an elephant in sport takes up a flower ! Once more I beheld the light of the sun ! There was my Preserver standing before me. O, what manly beauty shone on his brow and shed a halo of glory round him ! (*sighs.*)

Púr. How strange ! And then—

Deva. He said, Art thou, fair lady ! of divine or of mortal birth ? Was it the curse of some offended deity that had buried such unearthly beauty in that dark pit ? I replied, Sir, I am the daughter of Sucrachárya—my name Devayáni. On this he said, Lady, I know your father well ; all mankind reverence him ! I pray you, convey my salutations to him, I am Yayáti of the Lunar Race ! And then we parted ! My sweet friend ! When some god, won by the ardour of his votary's devotion, suddenly stands before the kneeling worshipper, and having granted the wishes of his soul, melts into air ; as that votary, unconscious of the disappearance of the divine object of his adoration, dreams that he still listens to the heavenly melody of the god's voice ; that he still sees before him that form of etherial light, e'en so did I ! I closed mine eyes and there rose before me the image of my deliverer like a vision of glory ! Ever since that hour has that radiant image dwelt in my heart ! Alas !

shall I ever again hear the music of that voice, ever again behold that brow whereon Majesty sits as on her throne! —O, that ^{they} were dead! (*weeps.*)

Púr. This, indeed, is a marvellous tale! Prithee, why dost thou conceal the thoughts of thy bosom from our reverend father?

Deva. O, fie! Is this a tale meet for his ears? King Yáyati springs from the Warrior Caste and I am a Bramin's daughter.^(k)

Púr. True, holy maiden! But look at that sweet budding flow'r. Were it to open its golden arms and take to its soft bosom the faithless worm, how soon would that traitor guest eat into its gentle heart and rob it of its beauty and life! Such is love when the innocent maid conceals it in her breast! 'Twere better that this, the story of thy love, should reach the Sage's ears.

Deva. O, fie! art thou mad? 'Twere far better that I should die first!

Púr. Look there! Fortune is leading the Sage hitherward. I look upon this as a propitious omen.

Deva. (*As if frightened.*) O, have pity upon me, sweet Púrniká, I beseech thee!—

Púr. Can the blind see which is the best path-way?

Deva. (*As if frightened.*) O, have mercy upon me! Thou know'st how irascible our father is! Great God! Dost thou wish to offer me as a sacrifice to the all-consuming fire of his deadly wrath?

Púr. I'm not thy enemy, dear! Prithee, leave me now and I shall plead for thee to our reverend father!

Deva. Farewell, perchance we shall never meet again! He is sure to slay me in his wrath.

[*Exit.*

Enter SUCRACHARYA.

Púr. Father! my dear friend hath at last unfolded the thoughts of her heart to me!

Suc. Eh? What say'st thou, child?

Púr. Father, what your reverence thought, is true!

Suc. What is there that the eye of devotion cannot see? Prithee, child Púrníká! How named she the youth she loves?

Púr. Father, his name is Yayáti.

Suc. Ha! Ha! 'Twas to adorn the bosom of Vishnu that the blue depths of ocean yielded up the glorious gem Kaustava!^(l) This Yayáti, my child, is the brightest ornament of the mighty Lunar Race.^(m) Tho' of the Warrior Caste, he is well worthy of the fair hand of my gentle daughter—for his profound knowledge of the Vedas, the might of his arm and his deep piety have won him the reverence of gods and men! Prithee, child, tell thy friend to be of good cheer, for I shall soon send my learned disciple Kapila to the royal sage⁽ⁿ⁾ and invite him to come hither and receive her in marriage.

Púr. I humbly thank you, father, and crave leave to retire.

Suc. Good night, child, and may'st thou be happy!

[*Exit* PURNIKA.]

I've ever wished to bestow my daughter on a worthy husband, and Destiny seems at length inclined to gratify me. A daughter, wedded to a good man, is ne'er a source of sorrow to her parents.

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The city Pratisthāna—a Street.*^(a)

Enter two CITIZENS.

First Cit. I pray you, sir, does your worship credit it?

Second Cit. Credit it? I tell thee, 'tis past all doubt! The King's grace (God bless him!) has well-nigh taken leave of his royal—senses!

First Cit. Alas! sir, is the glory of this renowned Lunar dynasty to set at last so darkly?

Second Cit. Tush! Does the envious Eclipse-Spirit o'er-shadow the splendor of the Lord of Night—the radiant founder of this mighty House—for e'er?^(b) Like that wicked Son of Darkness, will this misfortune soon pass away.

First Cit. God grant that it may! We, sir, live and grow under the mighty protection of this illustrious race, as the timid plant and the modest creeper live and grow under the shade and at the feet of some wide-spreading and majestic tree. If the fiery thunderbolt should descend on the stately head of that tree, the poor plant and the helpless creeper must all perish with it.

Second Cit. Prithee, cast such dismal thoughts to the winds.

First Cit. Would to God we could, sir! Alas! will the teeming mother Earth bear golden crops if the bright brow of her spouse, the Sun, be ever veiled by darksome clouds? When the man, whose image she adores in her sweet lotus-heart, looks coldly on the Daughter of Beauty, does not the bloom forsake her soft cheeks, the dewy light fade from

her beaming eyes? This wide kingdom, sir, ——

Second Cit. Prithee, cease. I tell thee, his gracious Majesty is only in—love! Some black-eyed damsel—the saucy, disloyal thief!—has made free with the royal heart! But be not thou cast down, most noble youth! Love, sir, like drink, tyrannizes o'er its votary's heart and brains; but like drink, love enjoys but a short-lived reign o'er us. Let the drunken sot lay his heavy head on the matronly lap of sleep, and he will rise a different man; and Time will soon allay the heat of the lover's fever.

First Cit. Is it possible, sir, that the King's royal grace should ——

Second Cit. Should fall in love? Ha! Ha! Thou'rt as innocent as a sucking infant! I tell thee, this vast and populous world is the well-stocked hunting-ground of that Prince of unwearied hunters—Kama.^(c) His flow'ry arrows are ever winging their way into the soft hearts of us, men and women! 'Twere no easy matter to elude him. The King's grace went to hunt in the land of the Asuras. There are, in that mysterious land, fair weïrds that could, with a single glance of their deep black eyes, bewitch the austerest and saintliest of anchorites. But prithee, do not distress thyself. If the perfume of some wild forest-flower has, for a season, taught his Majesty to sigh for that flower, the radiant blossoms that gem his own Bow'r, will soon wean him from such idle fantasy; for look you, my friend, poison's best antidote is poison's self.

First Cit. True, your worship! But see, the noble Monarchs of this Lunar race are the friends of the blessed gods; and the impious Asuras their bitter foes: God grant, that some Asura may not have practised wicked and hurtful charms on the King's most sacred Majesty!

Second Cit. I do own me, sir, to be a most resolute misbeliever in the efficacy of hurtful charms and in all devices

of the magician's Black Art ; but I do most piously hold that in those shining orbs—a fair woman's eyes, and in those nectar-cups—her ruby lips, there lie hid spells and charms that can work wonders ! But soft !—Who comes yonder ?

Enter KAPILA.

First Cit. Perchance some Recluse, come to seek the King's assistance against wicked Demons that disturb him in the performance of his sacred rites.^(a)

Second Cit. Let us withdraw awhile.

[They retire.]

Kap. Thus far have I obeyed my reverend master, the venerable sage Sucrachárya, for this is the city of the renowned King Yayáti, and I've journey'd me o'er rugged mountains, through deep and dark forests, across swift-flowing rivers, to reach it. The holy Sage, with his household, has gone to the Retreat of the sacred Rishi Parvata on the beautiful banks of the Godávery, and I'm come hither to invite the King to accompany me to receive in wedlock the fair hand of my venerable master's daughter—Devayáni. •What splendid sights greet mine eyes as I gaze around me ! I see gigantic warders in bright panoply mounted on fiery steeds, and brandishing glittering scimitars in their hands : I see crowds of men and women in gay and brave apparel : I see shops full of the richest commodities. ✓ I am a dweller of solitary forests and feel as one bewildered ! I start as I hear the shrill neigh of the war-horse, I tremble as I hear the deep roar of the war-elephant, and even the sweet voice of music falls strangely on mine ears. •How perplexing ! Each pile seems to me a royal mansion. In which of these does the Monarch dwell ? But I cannot present myself before his Majesty as I am. No. My wearied limbs do most

sadly lack repose. 'Ah, whither shall I find some meet resting-place for a poor hermit like me? (*Seeing the Citizens.*) There I see two men and they appear to me to be of gentle birth and refined address. I shall accost them. (*To the citizens.*) I pray ye, noble sirs, tell me where a weary and foot-sore traveller may find some resting-place in this populous city?

First Cit. Whom does your Reverence seek in this city?

Kap. I'm, gentle sir, the bearer of an important message from the world-renowned Priest of the mighty race of the Asuras, the sage Sucrachárya, to his Majesty, the great King Yayáti.

First Cit. Why then seek other resting-place, reverend sir? Yonder you see the palace of our noble Monarch. I pray you, proceed thither and you shall have accorded to you the reception that befits a messenger of your sacred character.

Kap. Thanks, good stranger! I shall then go on to the palace.

[*Exit.*

First Cit. I marvel, sir, what message it is the Priest of the Asuras sends to our Monarch?

Second Cit. By my troth, sir, 'tis a riddle I cannot solve.

First Cit. Will it please you then to accompany me to the palace?

Second Cit. Let us go.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The same,—a Chamber in the Palace.*

King YAYATI discovered seated, the *VIDUSHAKA* standing at a little distance.

Vid. My lord! Your grace at this moment is just as motionless and dumb as the golden Monarch of Mountains himself! (e)

King. (Sighing.) My good friend, if Indra with his terrible thunderbolt, sever the wings of the Monarch of Mountains, what can the poor wretch do, but brood in silent sorrow o'er his wrongs !⁽¹⁾

Vid. Well answer'd, i'faith. But 'beseech your grace, what Indra-like disease or of mind or of body, has done your Majesty so foul a wrong ?

King. (Smiling.) Art thou Dhanwantri^(s)—the divine Mediciner ? Why question'st thou me about my disease ? Can'st thou heal it ?

Vid. (With joint hands.) Has not your grace, my lord, heard how that the tiniest mouse may serve e'en the majestic lord of the forest !

King. (Smiling sadly.) Nay, my good fool, the strong-corded net that misfortune hath woven round me, would defy the sharpest teeth of such a mouse as thou art !

Vid. I pray you, my lord, a truce to jest ! 'Tis time your grace should tell me the cause of this pining melancholy. Think you, my lord, Prosperity would dwell in these palace-halls, if your grace —

King. (Sighing.) I care not ; let her depart !

Vid. (Stopping his ears.) May Heaven avert so dire a calamity ! Do such words, my lord, beseech those royal lips ? Does your grace long to bid adieu to the cares and splendor of royalty and retire to the solitude of some haunt of devotion, like that stern royal sage of old, Viswamitra ?^(h) •

King. (Sighing.) By the ardour of his devotion, the royal Viswamitra became a Bramin : alas ! 'tis not every one whom Heaven destines for such glory. •

Vid. How now, my lord ? Does your grace sigh to be a—Bramin !

King. (With animation.) My good friend, if I were the Lord of the Universe, I'd beggar myself to be even

the least among that holy race !

Vid. By my faith, your grace has grown monstrously pious of late ! They say, that in the land of the Asuras, people do not care a jot for either god or Bramin—the accursed atheists ! But your grace seems to have found a vast mine of piety in that infidel region ! Beseech you, my lord, tell me, has your grace had any quarrel with the sage Sucrachárya about any king,⁽ⁱ⁾ or, have the lotus-eyes of the Sage's fair daughter, Devayáni, made havoc of the royal heart ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! Tell me, I pray you, my lord, has your grace seen the fair Devayáni ?

King. (*Abstractedly.*) My God ! Shall I ever again gaze on that face, brighter than the bright autumnal Moon ? O, how surpassingly beautiful she is ! (*Sighing*) Alas ! thou fond heart, wander'st thou still in that lone forest and by the side of that deep pit ? Thou keep'st thy vigil in vain ! Ne'er again will the radiant Moon rise from those dark depths to greet thee with her sweet smiles !

Vid. (*Aside.*) Confusion ! The Devil take that Bramin's daughter ! So she is the precious cause of all this pother ? I've got at the disease now, but—where is the remedy ? What save Makaradhwaja⁽ⁱ⁾ can cure him ? (*Aloud.*) My lord ?

King. Eh ! What say'st thou ?

Vid. What say I ? I'm all ear, an't please your grace, and listen with humble attention to the royal—nonsense !

King. How now ? Nonsense ? Tell me, I pray thee, is the dark mountain-cave a meet casket for the gem that should diadem the brow of an Emperor ! (*Sighing.*)

The sweet gazelle of bright and liquid eye,
Wanders in forests lone : the priceless pearl
Is born i' th' womb of the unseemly shell :
The diamond lies buried in the mine :

How oft do envious clouds veil the fair moon !
The lotus-fibres' shape of sweetest beauty
Is hid beneath the waters of the rill—
Why dost thou so ordain, O, Nature, why ?

Vid. I pray you, good my lord, has the goddess of Poesy found a lotus-throne on your Majesty's royal lips ?
Ha ! ha ! ha ! (*Laughs aloud.*)

King. Silence, sirrah ! What an if she hath ?

Vid. Then let your grace take leave of kingly estate !
Pray, my lord, cast aside that magnificent royal robe and don on beggarly rags, and fling away your sceptre for a—harp !

King. Wherefore, thou fool ?

Vid. Does your grace not know that Poetry and Fortune are bitter rivals ? Can they dwell together ?^(k)

King. Nay, my good friend, speak not with scorn of Poets. They are the favoured children of the omnipresent mother—Nature !

Vid. Ha ! ha ! So sing the ragged gentlemen o' the harp, my lord ! I know they're the favoured children of the omnipresent god—the Belly ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

King. (*Smiling.*) Then thou, my friend, must be a builder of the loftiest rhyme, for in good sooth, I know not a more favoured child—a more pious adorer of that god—the Belly !

Vid. (*Bowing.*) As the King pleases. But pray you, my lord, where did your royal grace meet the fair Devayáni ?

King. 'Twas chance brought us together in a lonely forest.

Vid. How strange ! And what did your grace do ?

King. What could I do ? When the fair maiden told me her story, I left her to wander alone at her own sweet will !

Vid. What? Does the bee, my lord, take to its wings at the sight of the blooming lotus?

King. True, good fool! But remember, Deyayáni is a Bramin's daughter. I approached her with eager steps like a man lured by the pale gleam of the precious gem the serpent bears on its head; and I fled back as does that man when he sees the serpent!

Vid. Your grace did well, my lord.

King. Alas! No. I fled to save my life and yet I die! (*Rising.*) My good friend, 'tis a heavy burthen I've to bear! How long can the volcano confine in its torn and anguished heart the bursting flame! (*Sighs.*)

Vid. 'Beseech you, my lord, do not give way to despair!

King. Dost thou bid me hope? When the antler'd stag, woo'd by that cruel deceiver, the desert-born mirage, follows its beck, he follows it to die of raging thirst! To the man sprung from the warrior-caste, the beautiful Bramin maiden is e'en as that mirage to the stag. Pursuit is vain and must lead to woe and death! (*Sighing.*) My God! For what sin of mine, hast thou made the sweetest of thy works a grief and a misery to me! How have I sinned that thou bid'st this fairest lotus grow on fibre full of thorns for me?

Vid. O, be of comfort, I beseech you, good my lord. If your grace will trust me in this matter, I shall soon find out a most efficacious remedy——

King. Well, do what thou will'st!

Vid. With your grace's good leave, I shall be back in a moment, my lord!

[*Exit.*

King. (*Sighing.*) Alas! 'twas in an evil hour that I set foot in the accursed land of the Asuras! (*Pauses.*)



O, hush, thou silly tongue. Thy words grieve these mine eyes, for in that land of the Asuras, have they beheld the fairest, the most perfect of the Maker's works ! (*Pacing up and down.*) I feel as does the sea when the fires, hid in its bowels, rage and burn with tameless fury. O thou lord Ananga ! dost thou revenge thyself by consuming us, poor mortals, because thou thyself wert once consumed by the wrath of Siva !^o How strange ! Heigh-ho ! and yet why do I sigh ? (*Sits down.*) Let me strive to bear my fate with patience.

Re-enter VIDUSHAKA with the NATI.

How now ! What means this strange apparition ?

Vid. I beseech your grace, my lord, look at this fair damsel. Is not she the only lotus should bloom in the crystal pool of Desire ?

Nat. May the king be victorious !

King. Thanks, fair lady ! (*Aside to Vid.*) How now, sirrah, what meaneth this ?

Vid. (*Aside to King.*) Look at her, I pray you, good my lord ! Does she not make your grace forget the Sage's daughter ?

King. (*Aside to Vid.*) Think'st thou the man that longs for ambrosial draughts, would rest satisfied with earth-born honey ?

Vid. (*Aside to King.*) The blessed gods, my lord, drink ambrosial draughts ; that is no reason why we mortals should turn away from sweet honey ! (*To the Nati.*) His Majesty, madam, will thank you to sing him one of your charming songs.

Nat. I 'm his Majesty's slave. (*Sits down and sings.*)

SONG.

Hark to the herald kôkila—
The song of triumph sounding high :
How loud it swells—that sylvan lay—
Above the air-born minstrelsy !

Lo ! incense-like o'er grove and bow'r,
O'er forest-glade, and green-rob'd vale,
Floats the soft perfume of each flow'r,
Borne gaily by the wing'd gale. /

He comes, sweet Spring ; his charioteer
Is th' gentle South ; and earth and sky
Greet with glad smiles Love's minister,
In homage to Love's sovereignty !

O maid forlorn, ah ! doom'd to sigh,
Heav'n shield thee from the cruel dart—
The unembodied archery,
That desolates the widow'd heart !

King. How sweet ! Your song, lady, ravishes my heart——

(*Behind the Stage.*) How now, thou impudent, thou unmannerly Warder ! dost thou dare me ! I tell thee, fellow, I come to seek the king !

King. Ha ? Who is it that speaks in such loud and imperious accents at the royal portal ?

Vid. It must be some religious Recluse. Hark to the melody of the holy throat !

Enter WARDER.

Ward. May the king be victorious ! Right gracious lord, the reverend Rishi Kapila is the bearer of a message from

the venerable sage Sucrachárya. He commends him to your royal grace and craves leave to ——

King. (*Rising.*) Eh? What say'st thou? (*Abstractedly.*) Kapila—the sage Sucrachárya!—(*aloud.*) Where is this holy guest? Lead us to him.

[*Exeunt KING and WARDER.*]

Nat. Beseech you, sir, why did his majesty appear so agitated?

Vid. Ah, sweet-smiling lady! What bee would not feel agitated at the sight of your flowering beauty!

Nat. Ha! ha! Well answered, thou divine sage! Your bee then takes to its wings at the sight of flowering beauty! Ha! ha! Come, let us go and see whither his Majesty is gone to.

Vid. Thou, beautiful, art as the magnet and I—a poor bit of doating iron! O, I long to cling to thee! (*Taking her hand.*) Lo! the gods have concealed the ruby cup of their most delicious nectar in thy lips. Prithee, make me immortal with a kiss!

Nat. (*Aside.*) Here's a savage Bramin-bull for you! (*Aloud.*) out upon thee, thou wretch!

[*Runs away.*]

Vid. Curse on thy impudence, thou trull! I see thou know'st what a well-lined purse means—but thou can'st not appreciate noble wit!—Let me follow her.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*The same—one of the Gates of the Palace.*

Several CITIZENS discovered standing.

First Cit. O, how glorious ! Pray you, sir, look yonder —

Second Cit. I see but vast volumes of dust rolling up to the skies, for, look you, that thief Time has not spared the light that once shone in these poor eyes. Alas ! he has filch'd the greater portion thereof.

First Cit. Beseech you, sir, look at those gigantic elephants and their riders ! Ha ! Is that an array of moving clouds, or have the moveless mountains found their golden wings again ? See, what beautiful war-steeds, bravely caparisoned, follow them ! And look at those bright war-chariots, and the silken banners that disport them on the air ! How wonderful ! The armour of the knights glitters in the sun-light and seems as if vomiting forth flames ! Hark to the joyous bursts of music and see what fair-brow'd and dainty damsels ride on, scattering fresh flow'rs. (*Music behind the stage.*) There comes our noble monarch, in the midst of his youthful companions ! Methinks, I see Vishnu riding on his eagle-crested car to the bridal of the lotus-eyed daughter of Ocean !^(m)

Second Cit. Thou say'st true, my friend ! The royal Yayāti may well be called Vishnu, for he is the Best of men !⁽ⁿ⁾ And I've heard say that the daughter of the sage Sūcrachárya is as beautiful as the Ocean-born goddess herself ! God grant that the union of our youthful monarch with so sweet a lady may be a source of joy and happiness to mankind.

Third Cit. Is the marriage-rite, sir, to be perform'd in the land of the Asuras ?

Second Cit. No. The holy sage, with his fair daughter, now dwells with the Rishi Parvata, on the green banks of the soft-flowing Godávery.

Third Cit. Good. Those accursed Asuras are the bitter foes of the blessed gods; and they must hate the brave kings of this illustrious race, the friends of the Immortals! The king's presence in their vile land would have led to blows, perchance, to blood-shed!

Second Cit. True. But who comes yonder?

Enter MINISTER.

Is that our Monarch's Minister?

3rd Cit. It is his excellency.

Minis. Heigh-ho! Ananta has this day placed on my shoulders this huge Earth!^(e) 'Tis a heavy burthen!

First Cit. Will't please your excellency to tell us how long his grace intends to absent him from his kingdom?

Minis. I've heard say that the land through which the Godávery flows, is a beautiful land, with its lofty hills, its dark and eternal forests, its unnumbered holy places: our noble monarch is fond of the chase, and the presence of his fair queen will add fresh charms to the beauties of nature, and in all likelihood, prolong his wanderings.

Second Cit. 'Tis likely, and the more so as his Majesty's royal mind must be quite free from all anxious thoughts on account of his kingdom, since its safety has been committed unto such able hands!

Minis. (Bowing.) You flatter me, good Citizen. But the absence of Indra throws an air of gloom on the gay city of the Immortals. Can the host of stars shed so bright a flood of glory on the earth as the Moon? Who can command the army of the celestials with such dignity and grace as Kumára himself?^(p)

Second Cit. True, noble sir! But your excellency is not the unworthy vice-gerent of so glorious a monarch! (*Listening.*) I no longer hear the sounds of music. The royal train has left us far behind. Let us retire.

Minis. As you please, good Citizen!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The same—before the Palace.**Enter MINISTER.*

Minis. His Majesty's return to his kingdom from the sylvan Retreat of the sages, is a source of the most boundless joy to his loyal and loving subjects. As the Earth greets her glorious spouse, the sun, (what, time he appears on the golden orient hill) clad in a robe of light and with a coronal of dewy flow'rs on her glad and queenly brow, this populous city, that so long mourned the absence of her gracious young lord, rejoices to-day in fulness of her heart! (*Music behind the stage.*) Hark to the sounds of revelry and mirth! The whole city wears a gay and festive look; and why should it not do so? King Yayāti is the brightest ornament of this lofty and imperial House, and his fair Queen, the daughter of the sage Sucrachárya, is the sweetest lady on earth! When mine eyes dwell on her, methinks I see before me Lacshmi—the adorable daughter of primeval Beauty! She is so gentle, so full of grace, and withal so stately and majestic! And well is our noble Monarch worthy of so beauteous a bride. Ah, does the vile Chandála drink the divine Amrita?^(a) Who dare woo and win the radiant Rôhiní but the glorious lord of Night, the delight of all eyes?^(b) The graceful swan disdains the saëvala^c and seeks the lotus-bush! His grace hath returned to his kingdom after an absence of eighteen months, and our sweet Queen hath borne him a lovely boy. The royal

child hath been named Yadu. How beautiful he is! Methinks, the sacred flame, nursed in the womb of the tall Acacia,^(d) hath burst forth to lighten the world with its celestial effulgence! May he, like his royal father, live to be the glory of his race! His Majesty's return hath removed from these poor shoulders the crushing weight of a mighty empire, and yet I've but little rest. Let me now enter the palace and look to the preparations for the festival.

[*Exit.*]

Enter VIDUSHAKA with Sweet-meats in his hand.

Vid. (*Looking around.*) I know 'tis a sin to steal—to rob a true man; but pray you, where is it said in the Shastras that we are not to steal—stolen goods, to rob a false thief! The king's fat Butler had hid these delicious sweet-meats from the royal table in order to enjoy them at his leisure—the greedy slave! I've quietly emptied his secret hive! O, what a pleasant rogue am I! Have I sinned? If I have, here I prescribe me most suitable penance. Come, thou penitent thief, give food to a holy Bramin, for that is a work of piety that can ne'er fail to plead for thee with the Recording Angel! (*Addressing himself.*) 'Beseech you, most noble Bramin,^(e) accept this poor offering from one who repents him of his sins most bitterly! What would'st thou offer me? Some few cates, an't please your reverence! May't please you to taste them? I will. (*Sits down and eats.*) Thou find'st favor with my palate, good penitent. (*Rising.*) what would'st thou have? 'Beseech you, sir, if I've sinned in stealing these sweet-meats, may my sin be forgiven me! I absolve thee, thou art free!—Lo! I'm a sinless man! Ha! ha! ha! 'Tis a glorious thing to

be born a Bramin! Ha! ha! ha! But let that pass. I've been wandering about with our mad King for a year and half in the wild regions of the South; I've seen wide and rapid-flowing rivers, but mother Yamuná, thou art the noblest of streams! I kiss the lotus-feet of thy sister Gungá, but I do adore thee! When I plunge me in thy limpid waters, how they sharpen—my appetite! Let me now go to my royal friend. Her Majesty the Queen sent me to see what the little Prince was doing; on my way to the royal nursery, I found the sweet-meats. A wandering beggar, in the exercise of his vocation, at times sees holy Benares! Ha! ha!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The same,—a Chamber in the Palace.*

King YAYATI and Queen DEVAYANI discovered seated.

Queen. My dearest lord, I pray your grace, tell me—
for these fond ears do drink with ever-fresh delight the sweet tale—O, tell me once again all that befell you when we parted near that dark pit.

King. My gentle joy, I fled from thee with the hasty yet reluctant steps of a man that had seen a glorious heav'nly vision, but which mortal eyes may not dwell upon unscathed. I fled, and yet how I longed to return to that lone forest-bow'r! I plunged me into the gloomy depths of the wood, but alas! a deeper gloom came o'er my soul! I wandered on, I knew not whither, and at last, weary and comfortless, sat me down beneath a tree. Just at this moment a hind stood before me. I grasped

my bow—for habit is oft-times a rebel to the sovereign will of the mind—and as I was about to launch the deadly shaft at her side, the unconscious loiterer turned his liquid eyes full upon me, and the bow and the arrow fell from my unnerv'd hands ; for in those eyes, I beheld the soft light that shone in thine !

Queen. (*Taking the King's hand.*) My ever-sweetest lord, O, am I not the happiest of women ! And then ?

King. Thanks, dearest !—I wandered on heedless of all around me and there suddenly fell on mine ears the soft sweet voice of a kokilá. I started, for methought 'twas thou calling me back to thy side !

Queen. Sweet lord of my bosom ! If this soul had then entered the body of that melodious kokilá, she would have sung forth in loud and clear accents : Turn back, noble King Yayáti, to the side of that dark pit, for lo ! the daughter of the Sage sighs, O, she longs for thy return !

King. My gracious love, if the mysterious page of the book of Destiny had been then laid before me, I should have at once sought thee back. But I knew not then how happy the hour wherein I had set foot in the land of the brave Asuras !—

Enter VIDUSHAKA.

How now ? What news, holy Bramin ?

Vid. May't please your grace, I've been just paying a visit to his royal highness, the Prince, your Majesty's right noble son. May God bless our gracious Queen and lengthen her days ! The Prince is as beautiful and glorious as the sun when he issues from the golden portals o' th' East !—And why should he not be so ! Lo ! he, whose father,—(*Pauses.*) By my troth, the rogue of a verse, hath taken leave of me with but little ceremony !

King. Silence, sirrah! Can a greedy knave like thee, remember aught save the names of dainty viands!

Queen. (*To Vid.*) I pray you, sir, hath my sweet Yadu risen from his slumbers? (*To the King.*) Will't please your grace to give me leave to retire, my lord?

[*Exit. QUEEN.*]

Vid. I marvel, my lord, what is there your grace cannot achieve.—

King. How mean'st thou?

Vid. Your Majesty hath won e'en a Bramin's fair daughter! By my troth, your grace hath robbed the land of the Asuras of its brightest gem!

King. Nay, good my friend, the land of the Asuras is marvellous rich in such gems, I warrant thee.

Vid. I can scarce credit it, my lord!

King. Hast thou seen her Majesty's fair gentlewomen?

Vid. Not all, my lord!

King. There is one among them, whose beauty, methinks, e'en a limner's art could scarce imitate!

Vid. Hath your grace then seen this paragon of beauty, my lord?—

King. As the midnight traveller, when the skies are o'ercast, beholds the bright moon but for a brief space, and then loses her among the endless fleet of winged clouds, sailing along the heavens——

Vid. How strange!

(*Behind the Stage.*) Save me, O, save me or I perish!

King. Hush! Methinks, I hear a voice of distress.

(*Behind the Stage.*) Save me, O save me! Alas! I'm a poor Bramin!

King. Ha? Who is't clamours so loud at the palace-gate! Prithee, look to it—quick!

Vid. I crave your grace's pardon——

King. (*Angrily.*) How now! Why stand'st thou like a motionless statue? Does fear chain thy feet to this chamber?

Vid. (*With hesitation.*) Nay, good my lord, 'tis not fear. Your royal grace, an't please you, is the sworn friend of the immortal gods and yet you've espoused the daughter of the priest of the Asuras! Perchance, this has roused the deadly ire of some wicked Asura, and he is come hither to seek—revenge!

King. Silence, thou white-livered fool! I must go myself to certify me of this mystery ——

Vid. Nay, I entreat your grace, do not expose your royal self. If fate so wills it, rather let me perish?

[*Exit.*

King. (*Rising.*) Your Bramin is a clever fellow, but he wears a heart fainter, I fear me, than e'en a woman's. But let that pass. I know not how it is, but the image of the beautiful maiden I saw among her Majesty's ladies, haunts me like a melancholy yet sweet spirit, a remembrance of past joy, the sad echo of music heard long ago! (*Thinks.*) Ah, I remember me—'twas in a grove that skirted the Retreat of the sage Parvata, on the banks of the Godávery that I met her. 'Twas eve, and the god of the thousand rays was sinking behind the western hills. The maiden was seated under the shade of a majestic tree and the freshest and most dewy flowers were strewn around her. Methought, the gods, charmed by the sight of her beauty, had shower'd those flowers on her! O, 'twas a fairy sight, that lonely grove, and the fair maiden blooming in it as its floral queen, her gentle head resting, as if in melancholy meditation, on the palm of her hand, beautiful and soft as

the lotus-petal. I entered the grove, but the sound of my footsteps disturbed her, and as her eyes met mine, she started and fled as flies the hind from the hunter! I've since learnt that 'twas Sermistá, the daughter of the king of the Asuras——

Re-enter VID. with a BRAMIN.

Bram. Save me, Mighty Prince, O, save me! A band of wicked thieves have lawlessly entered my poor house!

King. Ha? And who dare violate the sanctity of a Bramin's homestead in this realm! (*To the Vid.*) I pray thee, give me my bow and quiver—

Vid. My lord, will't please your grace to give me leave to lead this holy man to the Superintendent of Police?

King. (*Angrily.*) Dar'st thou disobey our commands, sirrah!

Vid. Not I, i'faith! (*Runs out.*)

Bram. Alas! alas! I'm a ruined man!

King. I pray you, sir, be of comfort.

Re-enter VID. with Arms.

Here I arm me to chastise those daring and lawless thieves. Follow me.

[*Exeunt KING and BRAMIN.*]

Vid. Now that his ire hath been kindled, the rascally thieves were best look to themselves. Your ant gets wings only to soar to—destruction! I must seek the Superintendent of Police.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III—*The same—a Garden adjoining the Palace.*

Enter VAKASURA and SERMISTA.

Vak. And is this news meet for the ears of thy royal and sorrowing mother? Alas! 'twould grieve thee to hear—as 'twould weary this tongue to recount to thee, the sad tale of her sufferings! My sweet child, 'tis thy lov'd presence alone can quench the cruel flame that hourly consumes her loving heart!

Serm. If my tears, my lord, can quench that cruel flame, never, O, never will these eyes cease to shed them; but I beseech you, persuade me not to return to the Land of the Asuras! (*Weeps.*)

Vak. My gentle maiden, the prayers and entreaties of thy royal father have at length soften'd the obdurate heart of the Sage and he repents him of his cruelty to thee. I pray thee, give me leave to seek the presence of the Queen Devayáni. Methinks, her grace would not lend a cold ear to the commands of her venerable parent. O, a thousand sighs are daily breath'd for thee in the city of the Asuras!

Serm. I beseech you, my lord, banish the thought for ever, or see me dead at your feet! (*Weeps.*)

Vak. What then is thy will?

Serm. Return, my lord, to the bosom of your country and friends, and O, lay this my humble prayer—alas! 'tis brief—at the feet of my right gracious and most loving parents, that they cease to remember their unhappy and ill-starr'd child for ever! (*Weeps.*)

Vak. My Princess, and what tongue dare wound the ears of thy royal parents with such cruel words? Know'st thou not that thou art the only lotus that peoples with beauty.

the stream of their thoughts—the only star that gladdens with its golden beams the heav'n of their hopes!—

Serm. Are there not parents, my lord, that see the fairest flow'rs in the bow'r of Love, torn and crushed by the unrelenting hand of Death? And doth not Time soothe and heal their sorrows?

Vak. Wilt thou then ne'er again behold thy country, the sweet scenes of thy child-hood? O, can it be that thou should'st forget the fond love of thine august parents?

Serm. (*Weeping.*) You wrong me, my lord! In the temple of my heart, I've shrined me the sweet images of my loving parents, and there I do adore them by night and by day, waking and in my dreams! But I entreat your lordship on my bended knees—do not urge me—O, ne'er again will I tread the Land of the Asuras! (*Weeps.*)

Vak. I pray thee, royal maiden, then give me leave to depart—(*After a pause.*) Thou weep'st, my child! O, I beseech thee, pause awhile and consider. The noble monarch of this realm, when he hears thy tale, will, I warrant thee, send thee back, with honours befitting thy exalted birth, to the longing arms of thy sorrowing parents—

Serm. (*Aside.*) Alas! thou poor heart, like the captive bird in the fowler's net, thou struggl'st to win back thy freedom in vain! (*Aloud.*) I pray you, my lord, urge me no more—

Vak. (*Sighing.*) 'Twere bootless then to delay me longer in this distant kingdom. I commend thee, my sweet child, to the holy keeping of the God of thy fathers. Farewell!—O, be happy!

[*Exit.*

Serm. Alas! the surging billows of the dark sea of despair buffet my frail bark; who is there to steer me to the

quiet bosom of some sheltering haven? (*Weeps.*) These are the bitter fruits of mine own folly : must I then complain when bidden to taste them ? In mine own land, my wicked arrogance wrought for me the chains of slavery ; and yet, though a slave, my days glided by calmly and the sweet breath of content chased from my soul the lowering clouds of sorrow. But what change is this hath come o'er thee, thou fond heart ? Lov'st thou Yayáti—thou that hast been hurl'd to the base earth from the lofty and golden pedestal whereon thou did'st once stand ? And yet, who would not forgive thy wild idolatry ? O, who can gaze on that brow, and not bend the knee in lowly worship ! Can the lotus remain veil'd when the bright Sun appears in th' orient sky ? (*Sighing and sitting down under a tree.*) Alas ! 'tis Death alone can heal this wounded bosom !

Enter KING.

King. 'Tis long since I last visited this enchanting spot. I've heard say that her Majesty's ladies dwell around it. By my troth, 'tis no unworthy bow'r for such delicate flow'rs ! The fierce rays of the Sun now burn the fainting earth like the fiery wrath of some offended god ; but here, in this lonely grove, methinks, the gentle Spirit of Solitude hath sought her home ; and her silent prayer, and the murmur'd entreaty of yond' silver fount, and the soft and melancholy orison of the birds in their leaf-hidden nests, plead for sweet mercy and they do not plead in vain ! The pearly dew-drops, wherewith Morn had wreathed the flow'rs, are still shining brightly, and the cool night-wind still sighs among the leaves as if loath to leave the lov'd haunt. (*Sits down on a stone-seat.*) The wicked and lawless band of plunderers battled manfully, but my winged shafts have drank the lifeblood of them all.

(*The sound of a lute behind the stage.*) O, how sweet !
Perchance some merry maiden is wooing her faery lute to
while away these sultry hours with her fair companions.
Let me draw near and drink the harmony of her voice !

(*Behind.*)

SONG.

O, beware, maiden of the slender waist, for lo ! there cometh thy
foe-man, riding in his car with the fish-emblazoned banner floating
gracefully o'er it, and seated on a blooming lotus ! His steeds are the
Bhrimaras : his charioteer, the sweet South-wind : the birds, his
trumpeters, sound the note of fierce war : and hark, how loud he
twangs the flow'ry bow ! Alas ! when he hurls his keen shafts at thee,
who will shield thy tender bosom !

King O, how ravishing ! I ne'er thought her Majesty
had so sweet a songstress among her ladies. Ha ? Does
my right arm throb ? What worthy fruit can I reap
here ? But the ways of Fate are mysterious. *(S)*

Serm. (*Rising.*) Alas ! Thou hapless maiden, and long'st
thou to break the fetters thine own hands have forg'd for
thy feet ? Can the mured bird burst the bars of its prison-
house ? O, my loving parents, O ye, the sweet friends of
my childhood, and thou proud land of my fathers, will
these eyes ne'er behold ye again ? (*Weeps.*)

King. Her mellifluous strain no longer floats on the hush'd
air—the leaf-hidden kokilá has ceased. (*Seeing Sermistá.*)
But soft ! Do I see before me some heavenly nymph that
hath descended from her æry haunts to wander in the soli-
tude of this noon-tide bow'r, or is it some daughter of
Earth with the unfading light of Heav'n in her eyes, the
radiant glory of Heav'n on her virgin brow ? Hush ! Me-
thinks she speaks. I must conceal me behind this tree and
listen to the enchanting melody of her voice.

[*Conceals himself.*]

Serm. O, what is there can tempt a woman's heart to rebel against the sovereign of its choice? Behold the golden creeper that so fondly embraces yon stately Asôka tree. What reck's she where she was cradled in her infancy, or what hand transplanted her to this bow'r? Ask her to abandon the bosom of her lordly lover, and would she not rather perish than forget her loyal and fond vows of constancy? Thus, O, thus must I live and die, tho' I cling but to a shadow! For thee, O Yayâti, have I made myself an orphan and an out-cast, and forsworn the joys of this world in the sunny morn of life! (*Weeps.*)

King. Do I dream? How strange! That is Sermistâ, the fair daughter of the mighty lord of the Asuras! But does she love me? O, what would I not give to win and wear so priceless a gem! Ah! was it for this that my right arm throbbed when I entered this garden? (*Coming forward and addressing Sermistâ.*) Tell me, I pray thee, sweet lady, hath the cruel ire of Siva consumed once again thy Madana, that thou hast abandoned Heav'n and sought this solitude to bewail thy loss?^(g)

Serm. (*Aside.*) What? His Majesty the King, and alone here at this hour?

King. If thou, sweet goddess, be'st not she whose glorious beauty enchants the Charmer of the heart himself, I beseech thee, tell me who thou art?

Serm. (*Aside.*) O, hush, thou fond heart! Why throbbs't thou thus? How sweet the words fall from those gracious lips!

King. Alas! how have I offended thee, gentle lady, that thou deniest mine ears the happiness of listening to the melody of thy voice?

Serm. (*With joint hands.*) I'm, sire, a lowly slave, and but ill deserve such condescending courtesy!

King. What tongue dare call thee a slave, thou fairest

daughter of Royalty ? I pray thee, sweet Princess, give me leave to offer thee this heart and hand !*

Serm. I beseech your grace, pardon me, my lord ! Alas ! I'm but a slave—and it ill beseems your grace to jest with one of my base condition ! (*Weeps.*)

King. I pray thee, fairest lady, be thou mine !

Serm. O, pardon me, my liege ! The Lord of Night embraces no flow'r save the queenly Kumudini !

King. (Smiling.) And does the queenly Kumudini droop on her crystal throne when her fond lover, the Moon, bathes her with his silver light and woos her to unveil her beauty ? (*Taking her hand.*) Since the day these eyes first beheld that faery form in that lone grove on the green banks of the Godávery, thy lovely image hath dwelt in this heart. I pray thee, gentle maiden, believe not 'tis chance hath brought thee hither !

(*Enter DEVIKA.*)

Dev. His excellency, Vakásura, is reluctant to leave this city without once more beholding the Princess, his fair cousin, and he is greatly grieved at her determination not to return with him to our dear fatherland. How strange ! Since Devayáni's marriage, a most unaccountable change hath come o'er the Princess ; she hath grown pensive, restless and silent, and I fear me, conceals her thoughts in the depths of her heart as the lotus conceals her perfume during the dark hours of night. O, can it be that loathsome envy hath

*The author of *Sermistá* has been found fault with for the abrupt style of courtship the King is made to adopt, but he wishes to paint the manners of the age in which Yayáti is said to have flourished, as he finds them described in the Mahábhárata and other old works.

found a home in that breast, once so pure, so full of generous impulses, and maidenly fancies! (*Seeing the King and Sermistá.*) Ha? Is that his Majesty, holding fond converse with my sweet friend? O, what a glorious sight! Methinks, the bright Sun hath descended to the earth from his golden car to embrace the beautiful and queenly flower he loveth so dearly! (*h*)

Serm. My gracious lord, as the forlorn hind, that hath stray'd from the herd, flies to some lofty mountain, and, with timid looks, mutely solicits shelter, so fly I to your Majesty. I'm, my lord, an orphan of the heart and a child of sorrow! (*Weeps.*)

King. (*Wiping her eyes.*) And may Indra's bolt crush to atoms the lofty mountain an' he give thee not the shelter thou seek'st, thou bright-eyed wanderer! O, weep not, sweetest lady! These soft eyes were ne'er created to shed tears of sorrow! (*Seeing Deviká to Serm.*) Who is this fair maiden?

Serm. She is my dear friend, my lord, and fellow-exile; her name—Deviká.

Dev. (*Coming forward.*) May the King be victorious!

King. (*To Dev.*) Thanks, fair lady. Thou see'st, I've this day won this most precious gem.

Dev. She is indeed a gem worthy to grace the diadem of an Emperor, my lord!

Serm. What news, my gentle friend!

Dev. His excellency, Vakásura, prays you to admit him once again into your presence before he departs.

King. What Vakásura?

Serm. Prince Vakásura, my lord, is my most honoured Cousin.

King. I've heard of him a hundred times, sweetest, and fame speaks goldenly of his valour. 'Twere a foul shame he should depart this city without the rites of hospitality due

to so distinguished a guest. Pray thee, let us go and welcome him with such poor cheer as we may command.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter VIDUSHAKA.

Vid. (*Looking around.*) This is the garden round which her Majesty's ladies dwell; but where is the King? Has then that son of a slave, the Warder of the Palace, sent me hither on a fool's errand? Curse on his impudence, the lying rogue! Foh! Are not these men of the warrior-caste mad? By my faith, your bards, when they call 'em "Human-tigers," do not deal in hyperboles, and false epithets! Is this an hour for a man to walk abroad in? I'm a poor Bramin, and ne'er couch me on the soft lap of luxury, and yet, look at me now! I've as many cascades and rivers flowing down my body as your Himálaya himself—the monarch of mountains. (*Putting his hand on his head.*) • Ha? am I Shiva? Wherefore then hath the sacred Mandákini come to dwell on mine head! ⁽ⁱ⁾ As it has been noised abroad that his Majesty hath sallied out alone to chastise a wild band of marauding thieves, the whole city is thrown into confusion, and the soldiers are running here and there like hounds that have lost their scent. O fie, who would jump him into the stream when he could, with infinite ease, hook the fish from land! (*Pauses.*) True, most true! The women that dwell around this garden, are the daughters of Asuras and Enchantresses, and I've heard say that by their vile sorceries, they often change men into—goats! Mercy! If the manly beauty of our Sovereign hath tempted one of these weírd to practice her vile arts upon him, then? (*Appears thoughtful.*) O' my conscience, this is no safe place for the like o' me, for look you, tho' I'm not

so tall and comely a fellow as his grace, yet I am not altogether a—fright! What, if some one of these witches should cast eyes upon me! I'd rather forswear the company of the sex for a hundred years than be changed into a—goat! Your kings and princes may do well enough for that sort of thing, but I'm a poor Bramin. No, no—'tis a change that jumps not with my humour. Let me save myself in time!

[Runs away.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The same,—a Chamber in the Palace.*

Enter KING and VIDUSHAKA.

Vid. I pray you, my lord, why looks your grace so sad to-day?

King. Alas! All is lost—

Vid. How, my lord? What means your grace?

King. (*Looking up.*) As the mariner explores with anxious eyes the far heav'ns, if haply he may chance to discover some bright particular star to guide his lonely bark o'er an unknown dark sea, so look I for the ray of sweet Mercy from on high—

Vid. (*Aside.*) Ha? 'Tis no common distress can wring that cry of anguish from the lion-heart! (*Aloud.*) My lord, why looks your grace so sad to-day?

King. My union with my sweet Sermistá is no longer a secret to the Queen!

Vid. How, my lord? How chanced her Majesty to discover this secret of years?

King. Alas! When Fate frowns, 'tis ever thus! The Queen invited me this evening to visit the garden that belongs to her ladies, and 'twas with reluctance I yielded me to her entreaties. We wandered on and as we neared the house wherein the Princess dwells with her maids, what anxious and dark thoughts of coming evil filled my heart!

Vid. And then, my lord?

King. Sermistá's three dear children ran joyously to—

wards me, but when they saw her Majesty, they stopped short, as if abash'd by her presence—

Vid. Proceed, I pray you, my lord !

King. The Queen graciously said—Draw near, sweet ones ! Of what are ye afeard ? The youngest child, Puru, frowned at her and cried—Afeard ? We fear no one, madam ! Who are you that lean on our father's arm ? You are not, O, you cannot be our mother, for you do not kiss and caress us !

Vid. How fearful !

King. O, how I pray'd the earth to ope its ponderous jaws and swallow me !

Vid. What said the Queen, my lord ?

King. (*Sighing.*) I cannot describe to thee the stormy scene that followed this untoward prelude. I felt me like one distraught, and yet I remembered her Majesty's descent, and listened in silence to her bitter reproaches—✓

Vid. Your grace did well, my lord ! Methinks, her Majesty will soon forget her anger—

King. Alas, thou know'st her not. She is the proudest and most sensitive of women !

Vid. True, my lord ! But how long can a loving wife cherish in her fond heart feelings of resentment against her husband ? And the fiercer the storm, the sooner it exhausts its fury to sink lifeless on the bosom of rest. I pray your grace, banish your fears, my lord.

King. Think'st thou I'm afraid of the Queen ? Does the antler'd monarch of the forest fear the bright-eyed hind ? How can the soft arm that 'twould weary e'en to draw the flow'ry bow of the god of Love, inspire terror in man ? I tell thee, 'tis not the Queen I fear, but 'tis her—father ! If the tale of her wrongs should kindle, and her sighs should fan the fire of wrath in his bosom, how, O, how

can I escape destruction! Thou know'st the immortal gods themselves dread the anger of the Sage, the most irascible and implacable of Rishis! (*Sighs.*) Alas! 'twas an evil hour when I met the daughter of the King of the Asuras! (*Pauses.*) O, hush, thou ungrateful heart! O, let the world cry shame upon thy cowardice! O, fie! Dar'st thou murmur against her whose sweet bosom hath been to me the heav'n of joy! Perish, thou ingrate! thou'rt worthy of such a doom.

Vid. I pray you, my lord, let us repair at once to her Majesty's apartments. Her gentle heart, I warrant your grace, will melt at the sight of your distress.

King. The Queen hath departed this city with her gentlewoman Púrnika.

Vid. (*As if frightened.*) What means your grace? Merciful God! Is this a time, my lord, for idle regrets? Should her Majesty meet her father in her present mood of mind, your grace's worst fears may be realized!

King. (*Sighing.*) Ay, but——

Vid. Send men on the swiftest steeds to overtake her and pray you, mount your car to follow her yourself. Give me leave, my lord, to entreat your grace to do this at once! This is no time for idle regrets.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The same—a Choultry at a little distance from the City.*

Enter SUCRACHARYA and KAPILA.

Sac. How beautiful! Ho! Kapila! Is yond' city, whose airy tow'rs and battlements the setting Sun now gilds

with golden light, the seat of the puissant monarchs of the Lunar Race, the slayers of foe-men ?

Kap. Yea, father !

Suc. How glorious ! Methinks, the divine Architect^(a) hath rear'd those gorgeous palaces, those frowning castles, that lofty wall and those wide gates to shame Alaká, ay, and e'en Amarávati itself—the cities of the blessed gods !

Kap. 'Tis a city, father, worthy of its renown'd ruler, unequalled among the sons of men for his deep knowledge of the Vedas, his piety and the might of his arm !

Suc. Good. And happy am I that my sweet Devayáni hath been wedded to so noble a husband !

Kap. Yea, father !

Suc. 'Tis many a year since I last beheld the sweet face of my gentle daughter, and it hath been reported to me that she hath borne her royal lord two beautiful boys. My heart yearns to embrace them all ! But lo, the golden chariot of the blessed Sun now rests on the loftiest pinnacle of the western mount, and 'tis an inauspicious hour for us to enter the city——

Kap. Yea, father !

Suc. Wherefore I pray thee, good Kapila, look thou to our simple evening meal ; for here, in this quiet spot, consecrated by charity to the use and comfort of weary travellers, must we rest us to-night. Thou, good Kapila, art no stranger to this land, having visited it once when 'twas thine errand to invite the royal Yayáti to receive the fair hand of my Devayáni in wedlock. Haste thee, good Kapila, and look thou to the necessary preparations !

Kap. 'Tis ever an honor to do the bidding of my holy father !

[*Exit.*

Suc. Till Kapila's return, let me rest under this stately tree and meditate on the glories of Shiva. (*Sits down.*)

Enter DEVAYANI and PURNIKA in disguise.

Púr. Why is your grace so silent, Madam?

Deva. Prithee, come near me, good Púrnika! The solitude and deep silence of this strange place affrights me. Alas! how shall we, two poor and simple women, e'er reach the far land of the Asuras?

Púr. Your grace, Madam, echoes the thoughts this tongue would fain deliver but that it fears to offend you. It were best we retraced our steps to the palace!

Deva. (*Angrily.*) If such be thy wish, prithee, go thou back——

Púr. I crave your grace's pardon, Madam! I'm ready to follow you whithersoever it may please your grace to wander.

Deva. Dost thou counsel me to re-enter that accursed palace, to behold again the face of that vile and perjured man? Let him reign with his Sermistá and crown her his Queen! I here renounce him for ever! 'Tis true I've left my children with him, but I shall soon have them brought to my father's hermitage. They're the grand-children of a poor Bramin; what have they to do with kingly estate? Let Sermistá's children be his petted heirs, yea—let them inherit his dignity and his wealth! Alas! 'twas an evil hour when I met him. O, is this the reward of my love for him, the love that knew no bounds! My God! Why hast thou changed the perfume-breathing Chandana to which the fond creeper clung so tenderly, into the poison-tree? Why is the bright gem I wore on my bosom, become a globe of cruel fire? (*Weeps.*) O, dost thou chastise me

thus for loving him! But henceforth, I shall have no husband——

Púr. I pray your grace, madam, remember such words of ill omen should ne'er be uttered by a married woman——

Deva. Call'st thou me a married woman? Have I a husband? Alas! has not the lord of my bosom been devoured by that cruel she-serpent, Sermistá! O!
(*Faints.*)

Púr. The Queen has fainted! Help! help! Alas! 'tis a desert place and there is no one hears my cries! How can I leave her alone and go to the Yamuná for water? Alas! does she, at whose beck a hundred maidens contended who should first execute her command, now lie on the bare cold earth with no one even to give her—a little water! (*Weeps.*)

Suc. (*Rising and coming forward.*) Ha? Did I not hear a voice of wail? (*Seeing Púrnika.*) Pray, gentle lady, who art thou that weep'st in this solitude, and who is she that lies prostrate on the ground?

Púr. I crave your pardon, sir! This is no time for curiosity to claim explanations. This lady hath fainted. I pray you, stand by her till I fetch some water from yonder river.

[*Exit.*]

Suc. Here's a mystery it puzzles me to comprehend! Are these the daughters of men or fair witches that come to delude unwary mortals with their vile charms?

Deva. (*Slightly recovering.*) Away, thou perjured, thou false-hearted, thou base deceiver, away, away!

Suc. How strange! Methinks, she rebukes some man that hath offended her.

Deva. O, hast thou no shame! I tell thee, touch me not!

Go, go thou to thy dear Sermistá! The vile Chandáliní alone is a meet companion for the vile Chandála! The sweet-voiced kokilá disdains to dwell together with the croaking raven! Will the lioness deign to look at the jackall? Away, I tell thee, away! Touch me not! What care I for thy crown, thy sceptre, thy throne! Know'st thou not that I'm the daughter of the illustrious Sage, whom gods and men unite to reverence—the sage Sucrachárya? O!—(*Faints again.*)

Suc. (*With astonishment.*) How now? Do I sleep? Do I dream? And yet how can I say I sleep and dream? Hark! I hear the soft murmurs of the swift-flowing Yamuná! Lo! I see those leaves dancing to the piping wind! What marvel is this? who can this damsel be? Let me see her face. (*Removing her veil.*) Ha? And is this my gentle Devayáni? The crescent that years ago, gladdened these eyes with its new-born beauty, hath now attained the fulness of her splendor! But what hath brought the sweet child here?

(*Re-enter PURNIKA.*)

Púr. Stand aside, good sir, here is water. (*Sprinkles water on Devayáni's face.*)

Deva. (*Recovering.*) Where art thou, my Púrnika? Is it morn? Hath my sweet lord gone to the audience-chamber? (*Looking around.*) What strange place is this, my Púrnika?

Púr. I pray you, madam, rise.

Deva. (*Rising and on seeing Sucra; aside to Púr.*) I pray thee, good maiden, who is this venerable man?

Suc. Dost thou not know me, my child?

Deva. What says your reverence?

Suc. I say, hast thou forgotten me, my child?

Deva. Sir!—my father! O, my dear father! (*Falls at his feet.*) Surely 'tis Providence hath brought you here to-day. (*Weeps.*)

Suc. My own sweet child, why weep'st thou? Tell me how thou hast fared? (*Raises her and kisses her on the head.*)

Deva. My father! O, save your hapless child from the flames that gird her round! (*Weeps.*)

Suc. What mean'st thou, my child! Why art thou so disquieted? I tell thee, it doth not please me much to see thee in this strange place. Why hast thou left the palace and come hither so poorly attended, unmindful of thy rank and dignity?—

Deva. O my father, hath your unhappy daughter any rank, or dignity—

Suc. What mean'st thou, my child? (*Aside.*) O Heav'n, what calamitous visitation is this? (*Aloud.*) I pray thee, tell me how fares thy royal husband?

Deva. O my father, I beseech you, let not those hallowed lips pronounce the name of that perjured man!

Suc. (*Angrily.*) How now, thou wicked, thou impudent woman! Dar'st thou speak ill of thine own husband in our presence?

Deva. (*Falling on her knees.*) Consume me, O my father, by the lightning-glances of those eyes! O, slay me, I entreat you on my bended knees, that I may forget my sorrows! (*Weeps.*)

Suc. Can'st thou not tell me, my child, the cause of thy grief?

Deva. My father! O, my dear father! (*Weeps.*)

Suc. (To *Púr.*) If thou be'st *Púrniká*, I pray thee, expound this mystery unto me.

Deva. (Rising.) Father! He, to whom you gave me as to a gracious monarch, is, alas! a base *Chandalá*.—

Suc. Heav'n forgive thee, my child! What mean'st thou?

Deva. Father, he has done me foul wrong by secretly marrying my slave, that arrogant wretch, *Sermistá*! (Weeps.)

Suc. O, ho! Ha! ha! Know'st thou not 'tis permitted to men of the warrior-caste to wed many wives?

Deva. And must then your daughter, my father, share her husband's bed with a hated rival?

Suc. Since I've given thee in marriage to a man of the caste, I must perforce—

(Falling on her knees.) My father, O, my dear I pray you, curse him—

Suc. Silence, girl! 'Twere a sin to listen to thee?

Deva. Then give me leave, my father, to bury my sorrows beneath the waters of yond' river! O, give me leave to die! (Weeps.)

Suc. Heav'n help me! Is it thy wish, girl, that I should reduce thy husband to ashes?

Deva. O no! father! But I pray you, curse him with Decrepitude, that he may no more steal the hearts of guileless maidens with his witching smiles?

Suc. (After a pause.) Well, return thee to the palace—

Deva. Never, O, ne'er again, my father! will your unhappy daughter set foot within those accursed walls?

Suc. (Angrily.) Then I refuse to grant thy prayer!

Deva. I obey you, my father! O, forget not to chastise his perjury and falsehood! Follow me, my *Púrniká*.

[Exeunt *DEVAYANI* and *PURNIKA*.]

Suc. How strange is the sway of parental affection o'er the heart! But I must closely study the to me unsealed Book of Destiny, and see why such calamity hath been ordained to cloud the days of so pious a monarch as Yayáti.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The same —The Garden before Sermistá's Dwelling.*

Enter SERMISTA and DEVIKA.

Dev. O, do not weep, dearest lady! 'Twere vain to regret the past. E'en Time, that changes all things, cannot change that cruel, that pitiless heart! O, fie! 'Tis a shame that such a wretch as that Devayáni——

Serm. Nay, thou forget'st thyself! Prithee tell me, if thou own'st a priceless gem, priceless to thee—and if another do covet and steal it from thee, would not thy heart beat with wild resentment, and would'st thou not——

Dev. My Princess, is this a question to be asked?

Serm. Then why rail'st thou at the Queen? To the loving wife, the husband of her heart is her dearest treasure, her priceless gem! I pray thee, good wench, think not that Devayáni's bitter and unkind reproaches call forth these tears! O, no! They flow—because the sweet yet sad memories of the past sweep o'er my heart as I dream me of the future, so dark, so dreary, so full of frowning shapes and fantasies! O, shall I ne'er behold that face again! Alas!

as the hind panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee ! (Weeps.)

Dev. O, do not weep, sweetest lady ! His grace, I warrant you, will soon return to your dear side !

Serm. Would to God I could persuade this aching heart to believe thee ! (Weeps.)

Dev. O, be of good comfort, dearest lady ! See, with what patient hope the sweet Kumudini watches for the slow and solemn steps of Eve that restores to her longing eyes her bright love, the Moon ! Doth not the fond Chakraváki press her widow'd couch the live-long night, and fly to the bosom of her lord at peep of Morn !—

Serm. Alas ! know'st thou not that the bright Moon that gladden'd the heaven of this heart with its tranquil beams, hath set for aye ! O, will the sweet day e'er dawn to dispel the starless night of my sorrow ! (Weeps.)

Dev. My Princess, I entreat you—O, remember how your distress grieves ev'n your sweet little children !

Serm. (Sighing) I pray thee, go thou to them and soothe their childish sorrows !

Dev. Pardon me, my Princess, if I'm loath to leave you here alone.

Serm. O, as the wounded hind seeks the loneliest forest-glade to die unseen, and no one beholds her fast flowing tears save He who fills all space with his invisible and dread presence, so let me weep here till I forget my sorrows on the bosom of Death ! (Weeps.)

(Behind the Stage.) How can we quiet such unruly children ? Where is the Princess ? Prithee, call Deviká——

Serm. There—I pray thee, hark ! Go thou in and quiet them——

Dev. 'Tis with reluctance I do your bidding.

[Exit.]

Serm. Alas ! to what pitying ear shall I unfold the sad tale of my sorrow—of the cruel flame that consumes this doom'd heart !—(*Sighing.*) And dost thou, sweet lord of my bosom ! abandon me thus ? They call thee the shoreless Sea of Mercy. O, wilt thou belie that name ? Wilt thou rob the famished wretch of the viands thine own bounty hath spread before him ? Wilt thou force the beggar to yield back the gem—thine own gift—that he clutches with eager fingers ? Wilt thou quench the light wherewith thou hast guided the steps of the benighted traveller in the pathless depths of the forest, when thou know'st 'tis that star-like ray alone can save him !—(*Sighs and walks up to a Banian tree.*) Hail, thou stately tree—on Earth the image of God's Beneficence ! Thou hast countless leafy mansions for night-tenants, weary pilgrims of the air, and luscious food thou dol'st out to them with a plenteous hand ! When the fierce rays of the Sun fever the Earth's blood through her thousand veins, the panting herds and flocks fly to thee, as her young ones to the mother-bird, their home of love ! O, thou art blessed ! Majestic tree, as a father gives away his blushing child at the altar, so gav'st thou this hapless wretch to him, for 'twas beneath thy solemn shade that he called me—wife ! O father, in the desolation of my heart, I come to thee ! O, save me ! (*Weeps.*) Where, alas ! are the sweet hours of joy that were mine in this our bridal bow'r ! Tell me, O thou gentle Moon, ye golden stars that smile afar off, and thou sweet South, that com'st with noiseless steps to kiss these night-flowers, tell me, will they ne'er return !—How strange ! The remembrance of joy is no longer a joy ; but the memory of sorrow ne'er ceases to be a sorrow !—

SONG.

Is this the lone, the bridal bow'r,
 Where pillow'd on my true love's breast,
 Sweet midnight, in thy starry hour,
 This aching head found balmiest rest?
 The Moon shines bright on leaf and tree,
 On fount and flow'r—yet, where is he!

Come, thou sad night-wind! Let my sighs
 Mingle with thine. Blow softly thou,
 And as these tear-drops blind mine eyes,
 Come, kiss, O, kiss this fever'd brow,
 And I will dream that thou art he,
 Mine own true love! O, come to me!

How often have I sung him my sweetest songs in this bow'r! (*Sighing.*) Alas! will those days ne'er return! How strange! This is the spot he lov'd; this the hour that aye brought him to my side; and I'm she whom he sought: the place, the time—all remain unchanged and yet why do I mourn? Why is this heart as a chordless lute, its voice of melody hush'd? Ah, does the mountain-rill flow on, peopling the air with its liquid warble, when the clouds cease to feed it? O, dost thou abandon me, thou the majestic mountain whereto the fainting and weary hind—alone and parted from the herd—had come for shelter! (*Sits down under a tree and weeps.*)

Enter KING.

King. O, how beautiful! The bright rays of the Moon clothe this garden as with a silver garment; and the many-

voic'd Earth is now silent as a Nun, communing with sweet meditation! What myriads of fire-flies with pale gleaming gems, disport them on every dewy leaf! My God! In this thy wide creation, all thy creatures are happy save poor man! (*Sighs.*) The horse-men and pursuivants, sent forth in search of the Queen's Majesty, have as yet brought no tidings of her. Ah, let Fate work her will! I must now seek the Princess, and yet—a painful sense of shame comes o'er me when I remember the cruel insults heap'd on her by the Queen. (*Walks on.*) Ah, 'twas beneath the shade of this spreading tree that I first met her! (*Sighs.*)

Serm. (*Rising.*) In the sweet spring-tide of womanhood, her cruel anger made me a slave, and now it robs me of the only solace of my life! My God! Didst thou create this Devayáni to be the bane of all my earthly happiness?

King. (*Seeing Serm.*) Ha! Do I see my beloved here?

Serm. (*Seeing the King and taking his hand.*) My sweet lord, do I dream? Alas! I ne'er thought I should behold that dear face again!

King. Can'st thou forgive me?

Serm. Forgive you?

King. Ay, can'st thou forget what thou hast suffered for me and forgive the cause of thy sufferings?

Serm. (*Smiling.*) Is not pain, my lord, the price where-with we often purchase pleasure? Know you not that long and painful penance is the only key that opens the golden portals of Heav'n?

King. The Queen's Majesty —

Serm. (*Coldly.*) I pray your grace, my lord, to return to the palace. The Queen's Majesty is perchance anxious for your return.

King. (*Taking her hand.*) And dost thou too turn thee

away from me? My God! When thou abandon'st a wretch to perish, 'tis ever thus!

Serm. O, say not so, I beseech you, my lord! The Queen's Majesty——

King. Alas! Talk not of her, for she is gone——

Serm. How, my lord?

King. She hath departed this city in company with Púrniká—perchance, to seek her father's retreat.

Serm. My God! How fearful! I pray you, my lord, mount your swiftest car and follow her. Alas! You do not know how choleric, how quick to revenge the sage, her father is! And his wrath is deadly. I entreat you, my lord, lose not a moment——

King. Nay, thou counsell'st in vain. The serpent, that bears a precious jewel on its head, would sooner part with life itself than that gem! I cannot leave thee; and if we must perish—O, let us die together!

Serm. Nay, my gentle lord, think not of me. The world hath been to me a school of bitter affliction, and, if need be, let me go forth as a beggar from door to door and welcome the pitiless contempt that may be shower'd on this bared head! O, I pray your grace, bring not destruction upon this noble House, this renowned Lunar Dynasty——

King. And is this renown'd Lunar Dynasty dearer to me than thou? Perish its renown! But thou——

Serm. Speak, I pray you, my sweetest lord! Why this sudden silence?

King. I feel as if a deadly arrow hath just pierced my bosom. The world grows dark.—(*Faints.*)

Serm. Alas! and do you thus abandon me, my Emperor, my King! O, who will now protect her who was dearer to you than even the glory of your race! (*Weeps.*)

Re-enter DEVIKA.

Dev. My Princess, pray what means this—(*Seeing the king.*) Alas! Why does the gracious Majesty of this mighty realm lie thus on the bare earth?

King. (*Faintly.*) Farewell, O, farewell for ever! Alas! I die——

Serm. (*Weeping.*) O, let me follow your grace, my lord!

Dev. My Princess, do not thus abandon yourself to grief now, but help me to raise his Majesty.

Serm. Alas! My heart faints within me!

[*Exeunt with the KING.*

Enter VIDUSHAKA.

Vid. (*Listening.*) How now? What means this sudden and loud cry of distress in the palace? 'Tis some hours since I last beheld my royal friend. I've heard from the Warder that her Majesty, the Queen, hath returned to her chamber.—

Enter a MAID-SERVANT weeping.

Maid. Alas! alas! what will become of us!

Vid. (*Eagerly.*) Prithee, good Wench, what is the matter?

Maid. Have you not heard? Alas! alas! what will become of us!

[*Exit weeping.*

Vid. A plague on thee, thou fool! O, dear! What can the matter be?

Enter MINISTER.

I pray your excellency, what is the matter?

Minis. (*Sadly.*) Alas! This deadly serpent——

Vid. What, hath a serpent stung his Majesty?

Minis. You may well say so, my good sir! And 'tis a serpent whose deadly poison would defy the art e'en of the divine Dhanwantri——

Vid. Your excellency speaks to me in dark riddles, my lord?

Minis. Alas! The sage Sucracharya hath cursed the King's Majesty——

Vid. Ha? And how came the Sage to know all this in so short a time?

Minis. He is in the city, having reached it only a few hours ago.

Vid. Alas! Let me perish with thee, my friend, my king!

[*Exit with MINISTER.*

Enter DEVAYANI and PURNIKA.

Pur. These tears, these sighs, sweet lady, will ne'er recall the past! This repentance, alas! is too late!

Dev. O, am I not the most wicked wretch that e'er trod this fair earth! My God, with these impious hands have I polluted and broken the sacred image my heart adored! (*Weeps.*) And canst thou, O mother Earth, bear so cruel a monster on thy bosom without shuddering? And dost thou, bright Moon, shine coldly on me? O, I pray thee, rain fire and pestilence on me and consume me to ashes! (*Weeps.*) Why dost thou forget me, thou Death! (*Weeps.*)

Púr. I pray your grace, dear lady, return to your venerable father. 'Tis his hand alone can re-build the noble fabric thus ruthlessly destroyed.

Dev. Alas! how dare I show this face to him again? Will he not spurn me from his presence? O, my sweetest, sweetest lord! My noble husband! Thou brightest gem on the majestic brow, of Royalty! O!—(*Weeps.*)

Púr. I pray your grace, royal lady, return to the Sage.

Dev. He said to me—Give me leave, sweetest, to retire to some forest-solitude, and there forget the world and die!—O! break, thou miserable heart! O! (*Weeps.*)

Púr. Come, gentle lady, let us seek the Sage.

[*Exit—leading the QUEEN.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I—*The same—Before a Temple.*

Enter VIDUSHAKA and CITIZENS.

Vid. I pray ye, forbear! Are ye mad, my masters? See, the golden chariot of the Sun rests in mid heav'n, and the trees that fringe this pathway, have grown shadowless! Do ye wish to bring destruction upon this royal city?

First Cit. How sir?

Vid. Is this a question to be asked? I tell ye, 'tis nigh past the hour of noon, and yet I've neither bathed nor eaten me my breakfast: What, if the pangs of hunger should silence the voice of mercy in this breast and force this tongue to utter curses on ye all!

First Cit. Ha! ha! True, most holy Bramin! But I pray you, look towards the east. See, the golden chariot of the lord of day still rests on the bright peak of the orient hill, and the dews of morn still gem the flow'rs. Do you call this noon, sir?

Vid. O, sir, content you! Here's an Astronomer, (*pointing to his own belly,*) whose opinions in the matter of the Sun's motions are infinitely more accurate than those of e'en your Aryabhatta himself!^(a)

First Cit. Ha! ha! True, most erudite of men!

Second Cit. (*Aside.*) A plague on the idiot! When will he learn to talk sense? (*Aloud.*) Pray, sir, tell us how the king's Majesty hath been rid of the awful curse.—

Vid. O, ho! And sits the wind there, my friend! We,

sir, that are the worshippers of that god, the Belly, ne'er proceed in any matter without some offering being made to our jolly divinity !

Second Cit. Your piety, sir, does you infinite honor. We promise you we shall not forget the divinity.

First Cit. See our noble Minister——

Vid. How now ? D'ye mean to desert me, friends ?

Second Cit. Certainly not !

Enter MINISTER and CITIZENS.

First Cit. Your excellency is welcome ! We're all of us eager to know by what miracle the king's Majesty hath regained his health.

Minis. 'Twas by a miracle indeed ! When the Queen beheld our gracious Monarch on his bed of sufferings, her grief knew no bounds ! She wept, and, in the agony of her heart, pray'd for death ! Her gentlewoman Púrnika persuaded her to seek again the venerable Sage——

First Cit. And then, my lord ?

Minis. The tears of his daughter soften'd the Rishi's heart and he said : 'Tis not in my power to recall the words I've uttered ; but if any of thine husband's children will take upon himself the curse for a thousand years, his Majesty may then enjoy his health again.

Second Cit. How wonderful !

Minis. The Queen returned to the palace and told this to the King. His royal grace sent for Prince Yadu——his eldest born, and said, My son, thou art the future prop and glory of this renowned House. The anger of Sucrachárya hath stricken me with premature age e'en in the days of my manhood. Wilt thou, my son, heal me and take upon thyself the curse for a thousand years ?

First Cit. What said the Prince, my lord?

Minis. He said: I am sorry, to see your Majesty thus afflicted, but I pray your grace to forgive me.

Second Cit. And then——

Minis. Our gracious monarch cursed his eldest-born, and bade him leave his presence——

First Cit. The Prince's filial impiety merited the punishment.

Minis. His Majesty then sent for the rest of his children, both by the Queen and the Princess Sermistá, except Puru. And they all refused to sacrifice their youthful pleasures for his sake!

Second Cit. How strange! And then, my lord?

Vid. Hast thou no patience? Let his excellency's tongue rest itself awhile.

Minis. The King cursed them all and in the despair of his heart, cried aloud for death! When lo! Puru, the youngest of the Princess Sermistá's children, almost a babe, came forward and kneeling at his royal father's feet, exclaimed. Dost thou, my father, despise me because I'm a child? Let the Sage's fiery curse come upon me, and I shall gladly sacrifice youth and health to pleasure your Majesty!

Omnes. Wonderful!

Minis. The King embraced his noble son and said, I bless thee, son of my love, and thou shalt rule this sea-girt earth as its sole ruler and thy glory shall shine for ever e'en as the Sun on high!

Omnes. Victory to Prince Puru! May he live for ever!

First Cit. And then, my lord?

Minis. Our noble Monarch has again taken upon him the duties of his royal office.

Second Cit. Thanks, noble sir! (*To Citizens.*) Let us all go and pay our respects to our gracious liege.

Minis. I go to worship in yond' temple.

[*Exit.*

First Cit. Let us go.

[*Exeunt* CITIZENS.

Vid. Ha! ha! I must have some thing out of these news-loving Citizens. The Jack fruit tastes doubly sweet when eaten at another's expense.

Enter NATI.

Ha! My nymph of Heav'n! Thou com'st to me as a cool stream of water to the thirsty, as a shade-affording cloud to a man burnt by the merciless rays of the Sun! Ha! ha! (*Dances.*)

Nat. I pray you, sir, let me go to the palace——

Vid. Thou thyself art as a golden palace wherein the Queen of Beauty delights to dwell! (*Dances.*)

Nat. (*Aside.*) How can I rid me of this mad man?
(*Aloud.*) Pray, let me go.

[*Runs away.*

Vid. Thief! Seize that thief! She is running away with my—heart!

[*Runs out.*]

SCENE II—*The same—The Royal Audience-chamber.*

Enter KING, QUEEN, LADIES, VIDUSHAKA, COURTIER, &c.,

King. How it rejoices my heart to think that I shall soon behold the sacred feet of the illustrious Rishi !

Queen. Has your grace, my lord, deputed your Minister to invite our venerable father to the palace ?

King. His excellency, dearest, hath been accompanied by some of the noblest of our Courtiers.

Behind the Stage. Glory to Shiva !

SONG.

Sing—glory to the Lord of Uma,
He, whose attributes are countless,—
Conqueror of Death and Sin, the
God of Gods !

In whose throat there dwells for ever
The blue poison : on whose hoar brow,
Shines the crescent Moon so brightly
Without change !

Of the wondrous bow Pináka,
Of the all-destroying Trident,
Holder he—the sounder dreaded
Of the Horn !

He, whom Bramas'-self adoreth,
And great Indra—Swerga's Monarch,
He, the Lotus-footed Shiva—
God Supreme !

King. The illustrious Sage approaches. (*All rise.*)

Enter SUCRACHARYA, KAPILA, MINISTER and others.

Suc. Lord of this Sea-girt earth, may the Lord of the Universe bless and preserve your Majesty! (*To Queen.*) May'st thou be happy, my sweet child!

King. (*Saluting.*) Reverend Father, your sacred presence this day honours this ancient seat of the Lunar Dynasty! I entreat you to seat yourself. (*To Kapila.*) I salute the learned Kapila! (*All sit down.*)

Suc. Most noble King, wherefore see I not in this brilliant assembly, the fair daughter of my well-beloved disciple, the mighty lord of the Asuras?

King. (*To Minister.*) Let the lady Sermistá be invited to grace this assembly with her presence.

Minis. (*Rising.*) I hasten to obey my gracious Sovereign.

[*Exit.*

Suc. Noble King, 'twas the will of Providence that the Prince Puru, your Majesty's youngest son, should inherit the glory of your renowned race, and therefore was this cloud sent to darken awhile the sun-shine of your prosperity. (*To the Queen.*) And thou, my child, murmur not at the decrees of Fate because they have banished thy children from the heart of their royal father! Such was the will of the Father of the Universe!

Re-enter MINISTER with SERMISTA and DEVIKA.

Serm. I bow me at the sacred feet of the venerable Priest of my royal father, and salute this noble assembly.

Suc. My gentle Princess, it rejoices my heart to behold that after so many years! Daughter of the majes-

tic monarch of the Asuras, thou art blessed, for lo ! as the bright Sun fills all space with his golden splendour, so will thy child Puru fill the earth with his glory ! This day art thou freed from the chains of slavery, forged for thee not by man but by the all-controlling will of Providence ! Be thou happy ! (*To King.*) I pray your Majesty, receive her as another precious gem from me !

King. 'Tis an honor to obey the illustrious Sage. (*To Queen.*) What is your grace's will, Madam ?

Queen. (*Smiling.*) Your Majesty, my dearest lord, is somewhat late in consulting my wishes on the subject !

Suc. (*To Queen.*) I pray thee, daughter, honor the friend and companion of thy childhood !

Queen. (*Rising and taking Sermistá's hand.*) My sweet friend ! I pray thee forget and forgive the past.

Serm. My gentle friend, 'twas a higher will than thine hath brought these things to pass.

Queen. Let the plant of our love bear fruit and flowers again and let us henceforth dwell together in peace and harmony. (*To the King.*) My sweetest lord, two creepers embrace to-day the same stately tree.

King. (*Smiling and making them sit down on each side.*) They are welcome. I see two beautiful flow'rs blooming on the same stalk !

[*Soft Music in the air.*]

Suc. (*Looking up.*) Ha ? Are those the fair Nymphs from Indra's Court come to gratulate your Majesty on this happy union ?

(In the air.)

SONG.

(First Nymph.)

Lord of the sea-girt Earth,
Dear to the blest, immortal gods art thou ;
The stars smil'd on thy birth,
And wove a wreath of glory for thy brow !

(Chorus.)

O, live to Fame, to glory ever,
And may Lucshmi never, never
Free her from the gentle thrall,
That binds her to thy palace-hall !

(Second Nymph.)

Like to a noble stream,
Scatter thou plenty, health and gladness round ;
And be thy name the theme
Of Gratitude's sweet song—it's echo'd sound !

(Chorus.)

O, live to Fame, to glory ever, &c.

(First Nymph.)

Let Victory ever dwell
Upon thy banner—and may'st thou subdue
The wicked and the fell,
The foes of Virtue, the vice-loving crew !

(Chorus.)

O, live to Fame, to glory ever, &c.

(Second Nymph.)

The fruit of thy pure love,
The glorious Puru, when thy days are done,
Shall shine as shines above,
The splendor-clad, the golden-brow'd, bright Sun !

(Chorus.)

O, live to Fame, to glory ever, &c.

(Both Nymphs.)

Lord of the sea-girt Earth,
Dear to the blest, immortal gods art thou ;
The stars smil'd on thy birth,
And wove a wreath of glory for thy brow !

(Chorus.)

O, live to Fame, to glory ever,
And may Lucshmi never, never
Free her from the gentle thrall,
That binds her to thy palace-hall !

[They throw flowers.]

Vid. (To King.) My gracious lord, the celestial choristers have enchanted us with their melody ; but there are earth-born nymphs yet to be heard——

King. (Smiling.) Let them be called in.

Vid. There they are, my lord ! I pray your grace, look at them. Ah, when the limpid rill is agitated by the sweet South, 'tis thus the beautiful lotus dances !

King. Nay, as the fair lotus floats on gently flowing waters, so do these come, borne hitherward on the rich stream of melody !

Enter DANCING WOMEN.

Women. May the king's Majesty be ever victorious!
(*Dance.*)

SONG.

Sweet lotus, smile again !

Behold thy bright-brow'd-love—he shines on high.

And fled the low'ring cloud,

That hid awhile his golden Majesty !

Hark to the sylvan song !

Lo ! nature robes her in his dazzling sheen ;—

Smile thou, O, smile again,

Upon thy crystal throne—thou blooming Queen !

King. How sweet ! Let these fair dames be liberally rewarded.

Suc. And now, most noble Yayáti, may your Majesty be happy, and may the banner of Sermistá's glory ever continue to float on the gale of Fame !

King. Venerable father, the words of the holy can never remain unfulfilled !

[*The curtain falls.*]

END OF ACT V.

THE END.

NOTES.

ACT. I.

- (a). The Asuras are the Titans of Hindu Mythology and like their European brethren——

Propago
Contemtrix Superum.

- (b). A heavenly flower that never fades.
(c). The Nymphs of Heaven.
(d). This irascible old Sage was the Arch-priest of the Asuras.
(e). The Sun is poetically called the lover of the lotus.
(f). This bird (Anus Casarca) is said to pass the night apart from its mate, owing to the curse of some Sage it had offended.
(g). A species of the Lotus which blows at night and—as a matter of course—is in love with the Moon.
(h). The lotus blows during the day.
(i). Ráhu is the Eclipse of the Moon—supposed to be one half of an Asura who was cut into two by Vishnu with his Discus, because he (the Asura) had swallowed some amrita—water of immortality.
(j). The Moon—whom the Hindu Poets describe as a god and not goddess. Rôhini is one of the Lunar asterisms—fabled to be the wife of the Moon.
(k). A man of the warrior-caste [Kshetrya] cannot marry a Bramin woman.
(l). This was a Jewel obtained by the gods from the sea and worn by Vishnu on his bosom.
(m). A famous line of kings descended from the Moon.

ACT II.

- (a). This was the Capital of the ancient kings of the Lunar Race, said to have been situated at the confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges.
- (b). The Moon was the Founder of the race of kings from whom Yayāti traced his descent.
- (c). The god of Love.
- (d). This was one of the duties of the kings of old. See Sakuntalā—Act III.
- (e). The Himálaya.
- (f). There was a time when the Mountains had wings but Indra cut these off with his thunder-bolt.
- (g). The God of Medicine.
- (h). Viswamitra was a king of the Lunar Dynasty, and abandoned his throne to lead the life of a Devotee. After performing prodigies in the shape of penance, he was made a Bramin.
- (i). King Viswamitra had a quarrel with a certain Sage about a remarkable Cow, and not being able to cope with his Braminic antagonist, became a Devotee and subsequently a Bramin.
- (j). The god with the fish-banner—the god of Love. The word also means a description of Pills much used by Hindu Doctors.
- (k). In the original, Lakshmi and Seraswati.
- (l). The god of Love was consumed by Shiva—hence the name Ananga or the Incorporeal.
- (m). The goddess Lakshmi.
- (n). The Best of Men—is one of the names of Vishnu.
- (o). The huge snake, on one of whose numerous hoods the Earth rests.
- (p). Kumára—the generalissimo of the gods.

ACT. III.

- (a). The Water of Immortality. A Chandálā is a “Pariah.”
- (b). See Note (j) Act I.
- (c). “The Saëvala—(vallisneria)—is an aquatic plant which spreads itself over ponds and intertwines itself with the lotus.”—WILLIAMS.

- (d). This was fire communicated to this tree by the goddess Párvatí.
- (e). It must be remembered that the Vidúshaka is a Bramin.
- (f). "A quivering sensation in the right arm was supposed to prognosticate union with a beautiful woman."—WILLIAMS.
- (g). Rati, the wife of Madana (god of Love). It will be remembered that this god was reduced to ashes by Shiva.
- (h). The lotus.
- (i). The river Ganges is said to be on the head of Shiva.

ACT IV.

- (a). Vishwakarma—the Vulcan of Hindu Mythology.

ACT V.

- (a). Aryabhatta is the name of a great Hindu Astronomer.

